

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 23, 2010 has been entered.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Samuel A. Udovich on December 1, 2010.

The application has been amended as follows:

Canceled claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 15 and 16.

In claim 7, in line 1 after "Claim" deleted "1" and replaced with --22--.

In claim 8, in line 6, after "disposed in a" inserted --respective--.

In claim 8, in line 8, after "rigid plate-shaped" deleted "element" and replaced with --flange--.

In each of claims 9 and 21, in line 1 after "claim" deleted "1" and replaced with

--22--.

In claim 9, in line 2, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 9, in line 2, after "rigid plate-shaped" deleted "element" and replaced with
--flange--.

In claim 9, in line 4, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 9, in line 5, after "rigid plate-shaped" deleted "element" and replaced with
--flange--.

In claim 12, in line 2, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 12, in lines 2-3, after "rigid plate-shaped" deleted "element" and replaced
with --flange--.

In claim 14, in line 2, deleted "the rigid plate-shaped elements" and replaced with
--a plurality of rigid plate-shaped flanges--.

In claim 14, in line 3, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 17, in line 2, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 17, in lines 2-3, after "rigid plate-shaped" deleted "element" and replaced
with --flange--.

In claim 17, in line 3, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 18, in line 2, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 18, in lines 2-3, after "rigid plate-shaped" deleted "element" and replaced
with --flange--.

In claim 18, in line 3, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 19, in line 2, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 19, in lines 2-3, after "rigid plate-shaped" deleted "element" and replaced with --flange--.

In claim 19, in line 3, before "connecting element" inserted --nodal--.

In claim 20, in line 2, deleted "element is fastened to the connecting" and replaced with --flange is fastened to the nodal connecting--.

In claim 21, in line 2, deleted "element comprises at least one second joint element" and replaced with --flange comprises at least one second set of first and second holes--.

Inserted new claim 22 as follows:

--22. (New) A pneumatic structural element comprising:

- an elongated gas-tight inflatable hollow body having a longitudinal axis extending between opposing ends of the inflatable hollow body;

- at least one compression member disposed on a longitudinal side of the inflatable hollow body and longitudinally extending the length of the hollow body substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis, the at least one compression member being subjected to axial compression responsive to an operational load applied to the pneumatic structural element;

- at least two flexible tension members wound around the inflatable hollow body and longitudinally extending between the ends of the hollow body, the at least two flexible tension members being subjected to axial tension and equal stresses responsive to the operational load;

- a rigid plate-shaped flange disposed at each end of the inflatable hollow body and connected to both the at least one compression member and the at least two flexible tension members, such that the at least one compression member is disposed between the at least two flexible tension members, the at least one compression member and the at least two flexible tension members being interoperably coupled to each other at the respective ends of the hollow

body, each flange having an opening removably receiving a respective end of the hollow body and removably engaging a circumference of the hollow body, the flange operable to support a first compression force transmitted through and directed along a length of the compression member and a second tensile force transmitted through each of the at least two flexible tension members, the second tensile force being directed along a length of the at least two tension members;

wherein each at least one compression member is securely fastened within a respective first hole in each flange, and wherein the at least two flexible tension members are each securely fastened within a respective second hole in each flange; and

wherein the flange facilitates connection of the pneumatic structural element with a nodal connecting element for connecting the hollow body with other gas-tight inflatable hollow bodies. --.

Inserted new claim 23 as follows:

--23. (New) The pneumatic structural element according to claim 22, wherein the at least one compression member is connected to the flange by way of a screw fastened to the at least one compression member and received through the first hole in the flange and; and wherein the at least two flexible tension members are each received through a respective one of the second holes in the flange and each fastened thereto with a nut. --.

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

As to claim 22, Potocki (FR 2 341 017) in view of Pedretti (WO 01/73245) and Kocian et al. (US 6,012,742) discloses the claimed pneumatic structural element with the exception of comprising a rigid plate-shaped flange disposed at each end of the inflatable hollow body and connected to both the at least one compression member and the at least two flexible tension members; wherein each at least one compression

member is securely fastened within a respective first hole in each flange, and wherein the at least two flexible tension members are each securely fastened within a respective second hole in each flange; and wherein the flange facilitates connection of the pneumatic structural element with a nodal connecting element for connecting the hollow body with other gas-tight inflatable hollow bodies.

There is no teaching or suggestion, absent the applicant's own disclosure, for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the structural element disclosed by Potocki in view of Pedretti and Kocian et al. to have the above mentioned elemental features. Furthermore, such modifications would yield unexpected and unpredictable results.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MICHAEL P. FERGUSON whose telephone number is (571)272-7081. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30am-3:00pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571)272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MPF
12/02/10

/Michael P. Ferguson/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679